

E 210
.S68
Copy 1

THE PRINCIPLES FOR WHICH THE AMERICAN
REVOLUTION WAS FOUGHT.

RUFUS B. SMITH.

THE PRINCIPLES FOR WHICH THE AMERICAN
REVOLUTION WAS FOUGHT

.

AN ADDRESS BEFORE THE OHIO SOCIETY SONS OF THE
REVOLUTION

DELIVERED AT THE QUEEN CITY CLUB, CINCINNATI, OHIO, FEBRUARY 22, 1904

BY
RUFUS B. SMITH

1904

E 210
.S68

Gift from
Mrs. Marcus Benjamin
Dec. 5, 1890

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Ohio Society Sons of the Revolution:

The incorporators of the Society of the Sons of the Revolution, in their announcement of the reasons for the formation of the society, declared that they sought "to develop and nourish a true patriotism and an honorable pride of lineage among those whose ancestors distinguished themselves in the perilous days of our national struggle for independence;" that our ancestors "did their part; they gave us the start; it is for us to keep up the impulse, and in no manner can we better further their work than by informing ourselves of what they did."

The announcement concludes with this appeal:

"Let this Society, by drinking in the spirit of our ancestors strive, not as the Romans did for the mastery of the whole world, but for the mastery of everything ignoble among us; for purity of government, honesty in office and wisdom in our nation's councils."

These selections from the announcement of the purpose to be accomplished by this organization are made to justify the selection of the subject to-night, by showing that the selection has been made in conformity to both the letter and the spirit of such announcement.

To appreciate the effect upon the minds of the American colonists of the English legislation, which was the immediate cause of the American Revolution, it is necessary, in a general way at least, to understand the surroundings and the character of the life of the colonists; the struggles for freedom in England which preceded the colonial settlements; and the relationship, not only political but also personal and industrial, which the colonists bore to the people of the mother country.

During the entire colonial period the people were largely alike in their condition in society. "The inhabitants were all of one rank. There were neither kings, nobles or bishops." There was no poverty and no affluence. They were mostly farmers owning and cultivating their own farms; except in the southern colonies where slavery flourished. Yet history shows that no people are so jealous of their rights nor so insistent upon liberty as slaveholders, who regard liberty as "not only an employment but a kind of rank and privilege."

They lived and labored in a land which for the first time felt the hand of civilized man. Surrounded by virgin forests, fertile fields, mountains of commanding appearance, pure streams and splendid rivers, they came to regard freedom as the natural condition of man, and looked up only to nature and to nature's God.

They lived a simple life, free from the weakening and narrowing influences of the artificialities and conventionalities of a thickly settled community; and became inured to labor and to self-denial.

Yet the material side of life, engrossing as it was, was not for them the whole of life. The spiritual side was all important to them. While various motives were influential in promoting the early settlement of the country, yet the motive which overshadowed all others was a religious one; and we find the best illustrations of this fact in the settlement of New England on the north by the Puritans, and of Maryland on the south by the Catholics.

It is not surprising, therefore, that in those early days the influence of the church was the one to which all others was subordinate; and that the clergyman as typifying the religious spirit was the most influential person in the community.

I shall not attempt an analysis of the religious spirit of this age, for it would not be pertinent to the purpose I have in mind. It is sufficient to say, that whatever its shortcomings, it was a spirit which sought righteousness and justice; that it walked according to the light that was given to it; and that it sought to subordinate things worldly and temporal to things spiritual. While it had its dreams of empire, as all ages have had, it was an empire to be ruled by the Cross, and over which the Prince of Peace, with the Gospel of Peace on Earth, Good Will towards all, was to hold undisputed sway.

The colonists found time also to read, and while their reading did not embrace many books, such as they did read were of a thoughtful and serious character.

In plain living and high thinking, in willingness to make sacrifices and encounter self-denials for high ideals, no people at that time, probably, were the equal of the American colonists.

The intercourse of trade between England and her colonies was not so great as to make any close connection between them,

their foreign trade, for the most part, being with the Spanish and French colonies of the West Indies.

The distance, too, from the mother country of three thousand miles, to be traversed only by sailing vessels, still further weakened any feeling of dependence on the part of the colonies toward the mother country.

The patronage of the Crown in America was so slight, that this baneful source of influence, by which men nominally free are held in a sort of servile subjection, was absent; and the personal affection for the sovereign at the time of the Revolution had almost entirely disappeared, for the reason that the colonists of that time were removed from the original emigrants by several generations. The recognition of the kingly prerogative grew weaker as the years passed by.

The colonies were founded under grants made at different times by different English sovereigns; and all of the colonies, with the exception of Georgia, which was made a separate province in 1732, obtained their charters between the years 1603 and 1688, a period of time which has been made memorable in English history for the great struggle by the English people against the doctrine of the divine right of kings; a period when Charles I. lost his head on the block for attempting to levy shipmoney and other revenues without the consent of Parliament, and for other infringements on the rights of Englishmen; and when the people, tiring of the reigning family's continued assertions of prerogative and encroachments on the rights of the people, deposed it and placed William of Orange upon the throne.

Out of these struggles between the English people and their kings came this famous statement of the fundamental principles of English liberty, known as the Declaration of Rights, written not only on parchment, but for all time in the minds and hearts of the English people:

"That it was the undoubted right of English subjects, being freemen or freeholders, to give their property only by their own consent. That the House of Commons exercised the sole right of granting the money of the people of England, because that house alone represented them. That taxes were the free gifts of the people to their rulers. That the authority of sovereigns was to be exercised only for the good of their subjects. That it was the right of the people to meet together and peaceably to

consider of their grievanees, to petition for a redress of them, and finally, when intolerable grievances were unredressed, to seek relief, on the failure of petitions and remonstrances, by forcible means;" and the colonists never for a moment doubted that these fundamental principles of government were as applicable to them as to the people of England.

While their charters, granted at different times, were in many respects widely different, yet in every charter, with the exception of that of Pennsylvania, was found this declaration: "That the emigrants to America should enjoy the same privileges as if they had remained or had been within the realm."

Although the Pennsylvania charter did not contain this language, it was nevertheless argued by Dr. Franklin, when at the bar of the House of Commons, that a correct interpretation of the language of the grant to that colony guaranteed to it the same privileges as the other colonies.

The government of the colonies, while not entirely in the hands of the colonists, yet was in their control to such an extent as to prevent the passage of any laws, affecting their internal government, to which they objected. They chose most of their officers and paid all of them. The laws passed by them could be vetoed by the King and they submitted to laws passed by Parliament regulating their external trade. But those laws were not strictly enforced, and practically their burden was very light.

It is true that Great Britain sought to monopolize the trade of the colonies, and passed laws forbidding therein the manufacture of certain articles which came in conflict with the same articles manufactured in Great Britain; and also passed laws imposing duties upon the trade between the colonies and other countries, for the purpose of compelling the colonists to trade with her; but she never sought to secure a revenue from them.

But the laws with respect to manufactures, in a country largely agricultural in its life, bore so lightly that the colonists made no issue with England in regard to them; and the laws with respect to trading with other countries, especially with the French and Spanish colonies of the West Indies, were enforced with such laxity, that their evasion was rather a matter of course, and occasioned no quarrel between the colonists and the mother country.

We now approach the critical period which preceded the Revolution.

The Peace of Paris in 1763 concluded the war between Great Britain and France, and Great Britain found herself with a debt of one hundred and fifty millions of dollars, a large part of which had been incurred in the late war in defending the colonies; and British statesmen urged that it was but fair that the colonies should assist in bearing a small part of this debt, and should also contribute towards providing money to support a standing army in the colonies for their defense.

Prior to this time Great Britain had never exercised the power to levy direct taxes upon the colonies. But from this time, during a period of thirteen years, a series of laws of increasing severity, were passed. The first laws were based upon the principle that Great Britain could levy taxes in the colonies without their consent; and the later laws were based upon the principle that Great Britain could pass any law with reference to the colonies that she saw fit to pass.

In 1764 an act was passed which allowed trade in most articles from the French and Spanish colonies, but imposed such heavy duties upon them as to become almost prohibitive. The revenue arising from these duties was to be paid to the King, to be disposed of by Parliament for the purpose of defending and protecting the colonies.

“Till that act passed, no act avowedly for the purpose of revenue and with the ordinary title and recital of such was to be found in the parliamentary statute book.”

The momentous period which culminated in revolution and independence had begun. The passage of this law was followed by an attempt at strict enforcement by numerous officials, and by a trial of cases falling under the law in Courts of Admiralty, in which a trial by jury was denied; and the irritation and indignation on the part of the colonists was very great.

In 1765 Mr. Greenville, the Prime Minister, had passed the famous Stamp Act. It provided that all instruments of writing should be null and void unless executed on stamped paper or parchment. The proceeds were to be paid into the King's treasury and were to be applied under the direction of Parliament exclusively to the protection and defense of the colonies.

The feeling engendered by the passage of this law was so great in the colonies, and by reason of the agreement by the

colonists not to use such stamps, nor to plead their absence in court, the law yielded so insignificant a revenue that Parliament considered it wise, in 1766, to repeal it. In repealing it, however, Parliament did not recede from its claim of right to pass the act, but distinctly declared in part of the repealing law, known as the Declaratory Act, "That the Parliament had, and of right ought to have, power to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever."

In 1767 Charles Townshend had passed by Parliament three acts of far-reaching consequences. By one act the legislative functions of the New York Assembly were temporarily suspended. By another a Board of Commissioners of Customs was established in America for the purpose of superintending the execution of the laws relating to trade; and by the third a duty was imposed on all glass, lead, painter's colors, paper and tea imported into the colonies.

The revenues derived from these duties was to be employed in paying the salaries of the governors and judges in America, thus making these officers independent of the colonial assemblies, and the surplus, if any, was to be applied in defraying the expense of an English Army to defend the colonies.

The feeling created in America by the passage of these laws was so great that English troops were sent to Massachusetts to assist the officers of the Crown in the enforcement of the laws, an act regarded by the colonists as highly offensive and subversive of their rights and liberties.

In 1769 both houses of Parliament passed a joint resolution beseeching the King to have all persons in the colonies charged with treason sent to England to be tried, thus depriving such persons of the right of trial by jury at their own homes.

In 1770 the non-importation agreement among the colonists having reduced the imports to so great an extent as to cripple the British manufacturers of the articles covered by the Act of 1767, that Act was repealed as to all articles except tea, which was retained largely as an evidence of right to tax the colonies.

In 1773 the East India Company, which had accumulated a large stock of tea on its hands by reason of the refusal of the colonists to drink tea, procured an act of Parliament by which they were relieved of the export duty in shipping the tea out of England, and thus were enabled to land it in America, after paying the import duty, cheaper than the American merchants

could do. The company then shipped large quantities of it to America. The Americans feared that the importation of this tea, which could be sold at a low price, might have a tendency to weaken the resolution of the colonists not to consume tea, and determined not to permit its landing. In Philadelphia and New York the importers were not allowed to land it, but at Boston, after the people had refused to allow the tea to land, the Royal Governor refused to allow the ships to return to England, and they stood in the harbor some time, when by a concerted plan of the people of Boston the vessels were boarded and the entire cargo of tea, consisting of three hundred and forty-two chests was thrown into the sea.

This action with respect to the tea was followed by the passage of the Boston Port Act, which was intended to cripple the business of Boston by virtually blocking it up; for it was denied the privilege of landing or shipping goods, wares or merchandise, and by the same act Salem, supposed to be a rival city, was made the port of entry.

The Boston Port Act was followed by the passage of three others laws of the most radical character based upon the theory that Parliament had the power at will to change the charters of any of the colonies. By the first act the council or second branch of the Legislature in Massachusetts, formerly elected by the General Assembly which was elected by the people, was to be appointed by the King, and the Royal Governor was to appoint and remove all judges and other minor officers. Town meetings, except for the choice of officers, were forbidden, without permission of the Governor; and provision was made for transporting to England for trial offenders and witnesses. Although the Boston Port Act was aimed to cripple Boston only and the last three acts just described related only to Massachusetts, they created as much indignation in the other colonies as in Massachusetts, for the reason that if such legislation could be enacted by Parliament with respect to Massachusetts, it could and in time, doubtless, would be enacted for the other colonies.

I have thus briefly enumerated the legislation by Great Britain which was regarded by the American colonists as a violation of their rights, in order that the principles for which each side contended may be the more clearly understood.

A small minority of Englishmen, typified by the Earl of Chatham, took the position that the Parliament of England

had a certain legislative control over the whole British Empire, and, therefore, empowered to pass laws designed to regulate the trade of the Empire, but that the right to levy taxes in the colonies for the purpose of revenue could rest solely with the colonists. They drew a line between external taxation for the purpose of commerce and internal taxation for the purpose of revenue. Another small minority, typified by Edmund Burke, took the position that the legal rights of Great Britain in the matter were unimportant; as a wise and statesmenlike policy dictated a course of conciliation in dealing with the colonies and the enactment only of such legislation as would make them satisfied and contented, and, therefore, loyal subjects of the Empire. But the position of the King and of the great majority of Parliament and the English people was expressed in the Declaratory Act, which was a part of the law repealing the Stamp Act: "That the Parliament had, and of right ought to have, power to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever."

It is popularly assumed in this country that Great Britain, in the passage of the laws which have been described, was plainly and flagrantly guilty of a violation of the rights of the colonists under the British Constitution.

I shall not undertake to express a legal opinion upon that question. It is undoubtedly true, however, that a strong argument from the purely legal standpoint, based upon precedent and the language of the colonial charters, can be made in favor of the British claim; and the decided preponderance of opinion among English lawyers, of whom the great lawyer, Lord Mansfield, was one, was in favor of the legality of such legislation; and there is much to be said against the distinction between external and internal taxation having a sound basis in law or in fact. Is not the regulation of commerce and trade, and the prohibition of manufactures, quite as much a tax, although an indirect one, as a tax more direct in form?

It can also be truthfully said on behalf of the British claim, from the moral standpoint, that the money which Great Britain sought to raise in the colonies by direct taxation was not intended to be spent in England, as is popularly supposed in this country, but was to be spent solely in the colonies for colonial purposes.

It has been generally assumed, too, that the attempt to force this legislation upon the colonists was the work of George III. and his ministers, and that the blame for the American revolution rests solely upon them. But this is an entirely mistaken assumption. For "Loyal addresses from cities and corporations, from churchmen and dissenters, from the great seats of learning, from all parts of the kingdom, indorsed the coercive policy and showed a sentiment strongly in sympathy with the King."

The student of these momentous days of the eighteenth century is not surprised to find the king and his ministers, the aristocracy and all the various representatives of vested powers in State and Church ranged on the side of kingly prerogative and unlimited power over the American colonists; yet he is struck with amazement to find the plain people of England, who were themselves always jealous of the encroachments of arbitrary power on their own rights, in league with the king and parliament to deprive another people of their rights. The explanation is found in the memorable speech of Edmund Burke at Bristol in 1780, when he said: "It is but too true that the love and the very idea of genuine liberty is extremely rare. It is but too true that there are many whose whole scheme of freedom is made up of pride, perverseness and insolence. They feel themselves in a state of thralldom, they imagine that their souls are cooped and cabined in, unless they have some man, a body of men, dependent on their mercy. The desire of having someone below them descends to those who are the very lowest of all. * * * This disposition is the true source of the passion which many men in very humble life have taken to the American war. Our subjects in America, our colonies, our possessions! This lust of party power is the liberty they hunger for and thirst for, and this siren song of Ambition has charmed ears that we would have thought were never organized to that sort of music."

At the beginning of the controversy between England and the colonists the latter were disposed to concede a legislative power over them in the king and parliament with respect to external affairs; and that the king and parliament, under such power, had the right to pass laws regulating trade between the different parts of the empire. But from the outset the colonists insisted that the king and parliament could pass no law with

respect to their internal affairs, such as the levy of a tax, without their consent.

The argument in support of their position was based in part upon the language of their charters, which declared they were to have the same privileges as if they had remained within the realm; and, as no tax could be levied upon an Englishman except by Parliament, in which he was represented, and as the colonists had no representatives in Parliament, no tax could be levied by Parliament upon them, but only by their own assemblies, which were representative of them. They also stood upon the broad ground that they had inherited the rights they contended for as the descendants of Englishmen.

Colonial precedent was also in favor of their claim, as prior to 1763 all internal taxes had been levied by the colonial assemblies. Franklin said that, by the claim to tax, England deprived Americans of their property, and, by the claim to alter charters and laws at will, she deprived them of all privileges and rights whatever.

As the controversy continued, and the English government took the position that it had power to enact any legislation with respect to the colonists that it saw fit, the colonists, in their discussions, in their meetings, in their public addresses and State papers, were forced to place their claim upon broader grounds than precedent and the language of colonial charters, and to examine the very foundations of all government, and to determine what right one people had to govern another.

Their contest became not solely their own, but a contest for humanity and democracy. They contended that kings had but delegated authority which the people might resume, because the King's sovereignty was a grant from the people, and that the rights of the people were inherent and not gifts from the King: "that God made all mankind originally equal; that he endowed them with the rights of life, property and as much liberty as was consistent with the rights of others; and that all government was a political institution between men naturally equal, not for the aggrandizement of one or a few, but for the general happiness of the whole community." And so in 1776 they sent forth to the world the immortal Declaration of Independence, declaring: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that

among those are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." As Thomas Paine said in "Common Sense," a pamphlet whose influence in bringing on the Declaration of Independence can never be over-estimated, "The period of debate is closed. Arms in the last resource must decide the contest. A new era for politics is struck. A new method of thinking has arisen. All plans and proposals prior to that Nineteenth of April are like the almanacs of last year."

Thus the controversy between England and America, beginning in a difference of opinion as to the construction of charters, ended in a contest which involved the fundamental principles of the rights of man. The controversy ceased to be a contest; it became a revolution; it ceased to seek an adjustment of rights between one people and another people who sought to govern them, and became a war for independence and nationality; and the principles established were not for the benefit of the American colonists alone, but for the political salvation of all mankind.

It may seem strange that in so short a period as had elapsed from the enactment by Great Britain of the legislation to which the colonists objected to the year 1776, when the Declaration of Independence was declared, the American people in such important respects apparently should have so completely changed the principles upon which they based their opposition to Great Britain.

But if we bear in mind the condition of society in America, as I have previously described it, the isolation of the colonies from all the countries of Europe, together with the fact of the great growth of their population and the increase of their commercial, manufacturing and social interests, it is not difficult to understand that since the early settlements a great change in public opinion with respect to the relation which they bore to the mother country inevitably must have arisen.

For nearly half a century the question of the political rights of man had been agitated and discussed by the American people. They examined and discussed every political theory of the rights of man which the world had known, from the metaphysical writers of the French and Continental schools, advocating at times unbridled liberty to the claims of arbitrary

power which rested on the doctrine of the divine right of kings.

In the discussion of such questions the profession of the law naturally and inevitably took the leading part, because its followers were necessarily students of such questions, and best fitted, as a rule, to discuss them. The age of the minister had been succeeded by the age of the lawyer, an age which gave to the world Thomas Jefferson and John Marshall, of Virginia; John and Samuel Adams, of Massachusetts, and a host of others.

Gradually, but steadily, the American mind had been working itself out of the chaos of conflicting theories of government, and the rights of man, into a clear and definite conception, which it came to embody in such phrases as "All men are born free and equal;" "Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed;" and "Taxation without representation is tyranny."

This conception had been reached only after slow and thorough consideration. Yet while the development had been slow, for this very reason it was sure of its ground, and had settled into a conviction that neither the argument of men nor the fear of kings could disturb.

The Declaration of Independence was not merely a "revolutionary pronunciamento," but a declaration of political principles which sooner or later must have been evolved from the conditions of American life.

It is true that in indirectly recognizing the existence of slavery, the founders of the American government were untrue to the great principles which the Declaration of Independence announced; but the recognition of slavery was a compromise without which the national government could not have been formed; and the prophetic words of Jefferson on this subject, "I tremble for my country when I think that God is just," were justified by the great war of 1861-1865, which grew out of the slavery question, and resulted in the emancipation of the slaves at a cost of life and treasure that staggered the world, thus proving that nations, no more than individuals, can violate with impunity the moral law, without in time suffering the punishment which the Creator of the universe attaches to all such violations.

But with the emancipation of the slaves the nation no longer stood embarrassed by an institution in direct conflict with its

principles; and with the close of the war in 1865 a great democracy, purged of the only poison in its system, stood forth, for the first time in its history, entirely true to itself, because entirely true to its great principle that all men are born free and equal.

From 1776 to the close of the Spanish-American War the Declaration of Independence constituted the political gospel of the American nation. None denied its truth, except as to negroes, and the result of this denial we have seen. Webster called it the "Charter of our Liberties," and Lincoln said it set up an ideal standard, toward which it was our purpose and duty to press with ever closer and closer realization. "If that Declaration is not the truth," he said, "let us get the statute book in which we find it and tear it out; let us stick to it then, let us stand firmly by it then."

And throughout the whole world, wherever men hoped or struggled for liberty, it carried sympathy and strength. Buckle, the English historian, declared "That it should be hung in the nursery of every King and blazoned on the porch of every royal palace;" and in every struggle for liberty throughout the world, whether in Poland, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, or the South American Republics, the American nation sent words of comfort, and inspiration, using the words of its own great Declaration.

The period of time that has succeeded the Declaration of Independence has been in one respect the most remarkable in the history of the world. The discoveries and inventions of the Nineteenth Century have been more numerous and more important than those made in the entire previous history of the world. They have bettered the material and social condition of the world amazingly, and given an impetus to the life of the world along materialistic lines such as had never before been dreamed of.

During this time the material prosperity of this country has moved forward with a volume and resistless force never before equalled in the history of the world. This result has been due to a variety of causes. First and foremost is the fact that our great Republic, offering a fair field to every one, has encouraged the capable and ambitious among us and attracted from every country a vast emigration of the thrifty, the energetic and the ambitious; and added to this cause has been the

newness and vast extent of the country, with its wealth of farms and mines, the new and wonderful inventions, which increased its manufacturing interests, the building of railroads and canals and the practical and enterprising spirit of the people.

As the minister was succeeded by the lawyer, so the lawyer has been succeeded by the business man as the most influential man in the country.

As Mr. Herbert Spencer says, "The present condition of things appears to be in great measure a necessary accompaniment of our great phase of progress. Throughout the civilized world, especially in England, and above all in America, social activity is almost wholly expended in material development. To subjugate nature and bring the powers of production and distribution to their highest perfection is the task of many ages; and probably of many future ages. * * * The English nation at present displays what we may call the commercial diathesis, and the undue admiration for wealth appears to be its concomitant—a relation still more conspicuous in the worship of the 'almighty dollar' by the Americans."

It would be both interesting and instructive to observe the effect upon American art, literature and social life which the mad rush for wealth has had; but neither time nor the subject of this paper would justify such a departure. I shall direct your attention briefly, and in outline only, to the effect which this predominant effort of the age has had and is in danger of having in destroying our recognition of those great principles for which the American Revolution was fought.

In the mad rush for trade and wealth which characterizes a materialistic age, the larger and stronger nations of the world are seeking under various pretexts, to seize and control the smaller and weaker nations, in order that they may be exploited for trade purposes. The wars of this age are not as of old, to make proselytes for some religion, or to make slaves of the conquered people, or to extract tribute from them, but to acquire foreign territory, which shall be so controlled in its trade and commerce as to add to the wealth of the conqueror.

The war in progress to-night, between Russia and Japan, over Manchuria and Korea, two small and defenseless countries, owned by neither combatant, is an illustration of this spirit.

I have come now to the period when, under the influence of the materialistic spirit of the age, by the Treaty of Paris, which

terminated the war between the United States and Spain, our great American Republic ceased to be a republic and became an empire; because a country which holds the people of another country as subjects is an empire, and none the less so because it does not rule as an empire at home.

In view of the fact that I appear to-night upon your invitation as your guest, and that doubtless different opinions upon this subject are held among you, I forbear to discuss or even to refer to many phases of that great change, about which I feel most deeply and profoundly; and I shall state only such facts as are undisputed, and draw only such conclusions as one may feel himself reasonably entitled to draw in the presence of men whose ancestors fought the American Revolution, and gave forth the Declaration of Independence.

The war with Spain was preceded by a declaration by Congress, which recognized as applicable to other nations those great principles upon which our own government rested. With a declaration from our own Declaration of Independence we announced to the world that the Cubans "are and of right ought to be free and independent;" and in accordance with our time-honored policy, we disclaimed any intention to enter upon a war of conquest, but, on the contrary, declared that the result of our intervention, if successful, should be the freedom of Cuba.

But by the Treaty of Peace with Spain we were not content to secure the freedom of Cuba, which had been the sole object sought by the war, but compelled Spain to cede to us Porto Rico and the Philippines.

In every previous cession of territory to the United States the treaties provided that the new territory in the course of time should be admitted as states to the Union, and that its civilized inhabitants should be citizens of the United States. The act by which we acquired the vast territory to the northwest of the original thirteen colonies, as well as the Louisiana, Mexican, Florida, and Alaskan treaties, all bear witness to this fact. In the cession of Porto Rico and the Philippines these provisions were significantly omitted.

By the acquisition of these islands, to use the language of Mr. Moorfield Storey, "Our country to-day exercises absolute power over more than ten millions of human beings—twice as many as the whole population of the United States a century ago. Our

dominion has been established without consulting them and against such resistance as they could make. They are not American citizens, nor will we ever allow them to become such. They are governed by the President and Congress, but they have no voice in the choice of either. They have no recognized rights under our Constitution: and if the President, by executive order, or Congress, by statute, grants them any of the rights secured to ourselves by the Constitution, such grants are merely privileges, which may be recalled with pleasure by a new order or a new statute. They have no representation in the Congress which taxes them and controls their destiny. In a word, no part of the government under which they live derives its power from their consent. They are merely subjects of the United States.”

We have taken, with respect to these people, the position which England took with respect to the American people, and which was stated in the Declaratory Act, which was a part of the act repealing the Stamp Act that it had, and of right ought to have, power to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever; and we have made it a crime to publicly read the Declaration of Independence in the Philippines.

And the people of the Philippine Islands, in resisting our claim and in fighting for their independence and nationality, for a government of their people, by their people and for their people, for a government deriving its just powers from the consent of the governed, have occupied the position which the United States and our ancestors occupied in the American Revolution towards the British Government.

The position of the people of the Philippine Islands is strengthened, too, by the facts that the American colonists derived their rights by direct grants from the English sovereigns, and acknowledged allegiance to the English Government; while the people of the Philippine Islands had settled their country centuries before the first American colonists had landed in America; that they had never acknowledged allegiance to or connection with us; and that our sole title to rule over them is a purchase in money from an overthrown monarchy, which they had helped us to overthrow.

The English Government was a monarchy, and the English people believed in monarchical principles. The American Gov-

ernment is a republic, and has always professed to believe in the right of every people to govern themselves.

Many well-meaning persons among us have justified our course upon the theory that the people of the Philippines and Porto Rico are an inferior people and incapable of self-government, and that no other course was open to us than that which has been followed. We have been told that the people of the Philippines are to be likened to Apaches and Boxers, although "there were two thousand one hundred schools in the islands and five thousand students in attendance at the Manila University; although they had established a government modelled after our own; their state papers would have done credit to any nation, and they inaugurated good judicial, school and revenue systems and preserved law and order;" and although the United States census, just completed in these islands, shows that ninety-five per cent of them are Christians and civilized; and the uncivilized tribes are fewer in proportion than were the tribes of Indians at the time of the establishment of our Republic.

Our Civil Commission, too, has found it impossible to make progress in the government of these islands, except by relying upon the ability for self-government, which these people possess. "They have added three native members to that Commission; have appointed three Filipino judges of the Supreme Court; have appointed a Solicitor General and many other officers from the natives; and have selected about half the judges of the first instance and nearly all the governors of the provinces from that race."

But, assuming that the people of these islands are inferior to us, it does not follow that they are incapable of self-government. In urging the recognition of the South American Republics, in 1822, Henry Clay declared:

"But it is sometimes said that they are too ignorant to admit of the existence of free government. * * * I contend that it is to arraign the dispositions of the Almighty to suppose that He has created beings incapable of governing themselves. * * * Self-government is the natural government of men." And Mr. Lincoln said: "No man is good enough to govern another without the other's consent. I say this is the leading principle, the sheet anchor of American Republicanism;" and John Hay

once said, speaking of self-government: "No people are fit for anything else."

And in words that are directly applicable to the present crisis Mr. Lincoln said:

"These arguments that are made, that the inferior race are to be treated with as much allowance as they are capable of enjoying; that as much is to be done for them as their condition will allow; what are those arguments. They are the arguments that kings have made for enslaving the people in all ages of the world. You will find that all the arguments in favor of king-craft were of this class. They always bestrode the necks of the people, not that they wanted to do it, but because the people were better for being ridden. That is their argument, and this argument is the same old serpent that says, 'You work and I eat; you toil and I will enjoy the fruits of it.' Turn in whatever way you will, whether it come from the mouth of a king, an excuse for enslaving the people of his country, or from the mouth of men of one race as a reason for enslaving the men of another race, it is all the same old serpent."

To establish a permanent colonial relationship between the United States and the people of our so-called island possessions, is to abandon the principles for which the American Revolution was fought, and to amend the Declaration of our own Independence.

Only, as in the case of Cuba, by a declaration that we are in those islands to establish a stable government, whether the time be short or long, and that when we have done so, we intend to recognize the independence of the people of those islands, and to turn over the government of their country into their hands, can we be true to those great principles for which our ancestors of the Revolution fought, and which for one hundred and twenty-five years have inspired our political life.

Had we done this at the outset, there would have been no war, and over one million lives, lost in war and in the pestilence and famine which follow in the wake of war, and six hundred millions in money, with millions yet to be spent, would have been saved.

If the great principles of this government were true in 1776; if they have been true through nearly two centuries of national life, they are true to-day, and will be in the generations still to come. Who will say that they are not? Their truth at times

may be denied or obscured by fallacious arguments; but they are working in every nation, among every people, silently, but immutably, like the eternal laws of nature itself.

These principles demand that either these alien people of Porto Rico and the Philippines be made citizens of the United States, or that they be allowed their freedom. There is no half-way course consistent with our principles; and as these people are unsuited for assimilation into our Anglo-Saxon family, we should immediately declare that as soon as they have established a stable government, which we should assist them in establishing, they will be given that freedom for which we fought in 1776, which we declared in 1898 the Cubans were entitled to, and which our political principles have always declared to be the right of every man in every clime.

There has come to the nation a great temptation. As the materialistic spirit nineteen hundred years ago is said to have taken up to a high mountain the purest soul in the universe and promised it untold wealth if it would be untrue to itself and follow it, so to-day it has taken the greatest of nations, whose principles are the purest in the world, to another height and promised it the mystic wealth of the Orient if it will abandon its principles and follow it. Let us, too, be strong enough and great enough to say: "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offense unto me."

If we fail in this hour of trial, as certain as the curse of slavery brought untold misery upon us, and every drop of blood drawn by the lash was paid by another drawn by the sword, so must we again for each wrong inflicted again make reparation until the uttermost farthing is paid, for, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." "As our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal," it is for us to preserve this great inheritance and hand it down unimpaired to the generations that are to come: resolving "that those who died for liberty in the past shall not have died in vain; that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, for the people and by the people shall not perish from the earth."

Let us not forget, but remember and follow the just and wise admonition of Washington, who, in his farewell address to the American people, said, "Observe good faith and justice towards

all nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all. Religion and morality enjoin this conduct, and can it be that good policy does not equally enjoin it? It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and, at no distant period, a great nation to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence. * * * * * It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world."

The lessons of history are manifest. Let us not deceive ourselves. It is only those acts of nations and of men which make for righteousness and justice, for truth and freedom, that merit and receive the love and reverence of mankind. At the impartial bar of history, its irrevocable judgments know no standards but these.

Let us not stand with George III. and Lord North; let us stand with Chatham, Burke and Charles Fox; with Washington, whose birthday we celebrate to-night; with Jefferson and Adams; with Lincoln and Sumner. Let us not seek the temporary pomp and tinsel and power of the conqueror, but that greater, truer and more permanent glory which ever attends the liberator.

The ancestors whose memory we celebrate to-night fought, in the principles involved, as great, if not the greatest, war that the history of the world records. It was fought not alone for themselves and their descendants, but for all humanity; and never since then has the contest for liberty in any land seemed hopeless.

No men in all the world to-day can point with greater and juster pride to their ancestors than those who are gathered here to-night. Let us not be content by merely worshiping their memory, but let us receive the birthright of liberty which they gave us as a sacred trust to be preserved and extended to those who follow us; and whenever and wherever we may, let us hold aloft the torch of liberty to others, that in their struggles the way may be enlightened to a future free and glorious.

"God be with us as He was with our fathers."



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 011 801 113 2